

**Question for written answer E-001323/2016  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Renaud Muselier (PPE)**

Subject: Pesticides and farmers

Despite EU legislation, a recent study has found that more than 97% of food samples evaluated by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) contained pesticide residue levels that fell within legal limits, with just under 55% of samples free of detectable traces of these chemicals.

Pesticides can be directly harmful to farmers, who are the first to suffer from their effects. The WHO estimates that pesticide poisoning, whether from insecticides, herbicides or fungicides, is responsible for 250 000 deaths each year. Exposure to pesticides is also far from limited to farming communities, with groups such as pregnant women, infants and children particularly vulnerable.

The impact of pesticides on human health is particularly strong in agricultural regions of Europe, such as the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region – France's number one producer of fruit and vegetables – and Corsica, where farming remains the largest sector of production, despite its low share of GDP.

What steps does the Commission intend to take to encourage countries to cut their pesticide use?